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(54) **IN VITRO EVOLUTION IN MICROFLUIDIC SYSTEMS**

(71) Applicants: **Medical Research Council**, London (GB); **President and Fellows of Harvard College**, Cambridge, MA (US)

(72) Inventors: **Andrew David Griffiths**, Strasbourg (FR); **David A. Weitz**, Cambridge, MA (US); **Darren R. Link**, Lexington, MA (US); **Keunho Ahn**, Lafayette, CA (US); **Jerome Bibette**, Paris (FR)

(73) Assignees: **Medical Research Council**, London (GB); **President and Fellows of Harvard College**, Cambridge, MA (US)

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See application file for complete search history.

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Primary Examiner — Narayan Bhat

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Brown Rudnick LLP

(57) **ABSTRACT**

The invention describes a method for isolating one or more genetic elements encoding a gene product having a desired activity, comprising the steps of: (a) compartmentalizing genetic elements into microcapsules; and (b) sorting the genetic elements which express the gene product having the desired activity; wherein at least one step is under microfluidic control. The invention enables the in vitro evolution of nucleic acids and proteins by repeated mutagenesis and iterative applications of the method of the invention.

38 Claims, 25 Drawing Sheets